**CLTC Mock Knesset**

**Goodman Education Program 2014**

**Touchstone Text:**

“You shall not judge unfairly: you shall show no partiality; you shall not take bribes, for bribes blind the eyes of the discerning and upset the plea of the just. Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may thrive and occupy the land that Adonai your God is giving you.” – Deuteronomy 16:9-20

**Goals:**

1. Participants will learn about the Israeli political system and Israeli society.
2. Participants will learn about several issues debated by the Israeli government.

**Objectives:**

1. Participants will be able to formulate their own opinion on Israeli issues
2. Participants will be able to identify the major players, issues, and challenges of the process.
3. Participants will be able to understand that Israel is a diverse society that often requires compromises.
4. Participants will be able to understand Israel’s value of human rights.

**Materials:**

* Overview sheet (pages 1 & 2 of this document) – 1/staff + 10 for the party leaders
* Political party table tents – 1/party
* Bills & Parties Overview sheet (pages 3 & 4 of this document, double sided) – 1/person
* Party Information – 1/person in each party
* Pencils/Pens
* Papers
* Poster materials

**Space Needed:**

One big room, if possible – 1 table for each party

**Time Table:**

00:00 – 00:05 Group Introduction

00:05 – 00:20 Parties read and discuss their profiles, and discuss their positions on the main issues.

00:20 - 00:40 Parties negotiate and try to form coalitions.

00:40 - 01:00 Final presentations are read and the Knesset votes.

01:00 - 01:15 Return to large group, wrap-up.

Set Up

If possible, tables will each have assigned seats with designated name cards for each political party. Participants will be instructed to sit in their assigned seats. The tables will already have materials spread out, such as pens and the party’s stances.

**Pull 10 teen leaders together in advance. Brief them on the program as a whole and assign each to be the ambassador leader for one of the parties. Give them their party’s information. Give them an opportunity to do additional research if possible. Answer any questions they may have. When you begin the program, remind them to sit at their assigned party. They’ll lead the first bit of the program, in small groups.**

**Detailed Procedure**

**Introduction: 0:00-0:05**

Group facilitator welcomes everyone and gives a brief overview of the program.

**PART 1: 0:05 – 0:20 Intro (led at each group by the party leader)**

The Party Leaders (teen leaders you pulled in advance) should:

1. Walk their group through an overview of their party’s platform.
2. Review the four bills up for a vote. Each party should determine how they will vote on each bill. Remember that parties must vote as a block – the number of votes (seats) each party has is listed on the overview sheet.
3. Each party will have an opportunity to publically support or oppose one bill in front of the full Knesset. Your presentation can be verbal, through posters, a rallying cry, a letter, etc… You’ll have two minutes to present.
4. Plan out your negotiations! For a bill to pass, it needs 61 votes. Who can you get to vote with you? What can you offer to do to get them on your side?

**PART 2: 00:20 – 00:40 Negotiate**

This is the fun part. Four bills are up for debate and each party will have the opportunity to vote on each bill. A majority (61) of votes is needed to pass a bill.

As soon as the bill is handed out, the politicking begins. Your party should devise a strategy of how to get your bill passed—who to bargain with and who to fight with. As ambassadors for your party, work with the other parties to negotiate passing bills.

For example, Shas might decide that they can strike a deal with Likud. They send an ambassador to Likud with the bargain that Shas will vote for Likud's  bill if Likud votes for Shas's bill. Another example is: Meretz might send an ambassador to UTJ saying that, if UTJ votes against Hadash's bill, then Meretz will vote for UTJ's bill.

**PART 3: (0:40-1:00) The Knesset Meeting**

* When we call for the Knesset meeting, all bargaining will cease and parties will sit together in the main room for final voting.
* Each party may choose one bill to present an argument for or against. You will have up to 2 minutes to make an argument.
* Each party will be called out, and you will announce how you are voting (For and Against) concerning the bill at hand. **Each party must vote as a block. Please inform the group if there were any deals brokered that influenced your vote.**
* Feel free to break secret deals to advance your own party's interests.

**PART 4: 01:00 – 01:15 full group wrap up**

Program leader facilitates wrap-up discussion.

**Bills in front of the Kayitz 2014 Knesset**

1. **Right to Marry**

*In Israel, marriages can only be officiated by State authorized clergy (of all religions). There is no such thing as civil marriages. For Jews, this means that all Jewish weddings must be done through the Orthodox movement, something which does not resonate with many secular Israelis.* ***This bill will establish civil marriages, equal under the law to religious marriages, which could be officiated by members of the Israeli court system.***

1. **Restricting Settlement Growth**

*Settlement development is a component of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel argues that it needs the housing for lower-income Israeli Jews. The building process supports the economy and many of the settlements are decades old and have full city-like structures. Because the land is contested between Israel and the Palestinians, halting new settlement development is often cited as a prerequisite to entering into peace talks.* ***This bill will temporarily halt settlement growth with the hopes that peace talks can begin.***

1. **Universal Draft**

*Israeli men and women join the army at age 18. The exception to this draft is the ultra-orthodox (Haredi) community, who can receive an exemption from army service in order to continue religious study. All Israelis are eligible to petition to do an alternative service to the country, which can include domestic or foreign service. The ultra-orthodox exemption causes significant discord among and separation from with the secular community in Israel.* ***This bill will end the automatic exemption and create a true universal draft.*** *Haredi Jews would still be eligible to apply for an alternative service, but would still be conscripted to the army for the same length of time as secular Israelis.*

1. **Equality for Growth**

*To help grow the economy and strengthen new business development, this bill would create localized grant programs. To help ensure that all of Israel’s citizens grow along with Israel, local jurisdictions will be required to distribute the grants to projects led by a diverse group of citizens, Arab, Israeli, Ethiopian, etc. The diversity will be matched to the local population’s diversity.* ***This bill will create this grant program as a pilot in 4 mid-sized communities, with the diversity stipulation.***

**Short Party Summaries**

**Combined Arab Group (United Arab List, Hadash, and Balad)** *(For the purposes of this exercise we have combined the three small Arab parties into a combined Arab block)* ***(11 seats)***Shared Key Objectives of these parties include: the creation of a Palestinian state; Secularization of Israel (removal of Jewish law from consideration); Social equality between Jews and non-Jews, requiring a focused effort to support marginalized populations; and, the “right of return” for Palestinians who left when Israel was formed (and their descendants). The Combined Arab group will not join any coalitions that further preference Israeli Jews over Israeli Arabs.

**Meretz** ("Energy") **(6 seats)** is a **left-wing, social-democratic political party**. Meretz's platform states that the party stands for “A Just and Comprehensive Peace between Israel and its Neighbors; Human and Civil Rights; Social Justice; and, Ecology and a Safe Environment.” They believe that every Jew has the right to immigrate to Israel, acquire citizenship, and live here. Recognition of an individual's Jewish status will be made according to pluralistic and liberal standards, and citizenship according to the Law of Return will be granted to any person who declares in good faith that he/she is Jewish. The State of Israel is governed by civil law, not by the Halacha. Israeli withdrawal of the Palestinian Territories is conditional upon security arrangements that will enable Israel to preempt threats quickly and efficiently.

**Labour** **(15 seats)** is a **centrist party** focused on creating a new reality in which there will be no more terrorism and war, and in which tremendous financial resources will no longer be committed to the arms race. In order to achieve this goal, Israel will continue to conduct peace negotiations, while at the same time, combating the forces of fundamentalism and terrorism that aim to destroy this process. This new reality will strengthen Israel's security and standing and will encourage economic prosperity and the welfare of the state.

**Yesh Atid** ("there is a future") **(19 seats)** is **a centrist**[**party**](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/partytoc.html) with a focus on safety, equality, and national growth. They promote a state with a Jewish majority and rights but not preference for minority participants. They work for economic growth and equal rights for all residents.

**Kadima** ("forward") (2 seats) is a centrist liberal political party. Among its platform statements are that in order to maintain a Jewish majority, part of the Land of Israel must be given up to maintain a Jewish and democratic state and a two-state solution must be achieved. [Jerusalem](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/jerutoc.html) and large [settlement](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/settletoc.html) blocks in the [West Bank](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/wbtoc.html) will be kept under Israeli control.

**Ha'Tnuah** ("The Movement") **(6 seats)** is a **center-left**[**Zionist**](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/zionists.html)[**political party**](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/partytoc.html)**.** Ha'Tnuah's platform is based around making peace with the Palestinians, social justice in Israel, environmental protection, military or national service for all citizens and religious pluralism. The party motto is: "For Israelis who seek a country that embraces harmony and respect as opposed to polarization; a peace process rather than intransigence, and hope rather than despair – Ha'Tnuah constitutes a new political development whose time has come."

**United Torah Judaism** (UTJ) **(7 seats)** represents the Israel's growing ultra-Orthodox, or [Haredi](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/orthostate.html), community. It opposes the separation of religion and state, civil marriage, drafting ultra-Orthodox men for military service and any changes to laws that prohibit businesses from opening on [Sabbath](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Shabbattoc.html) and [holidays](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/holidays.html). The party has been successful in securing financial aid for the ultra-Orthodox community, including government stipends for large families. The party advocates for more inclusion of Jewish law within the frame of the state, saying that it aspires to “resolve, in the spirit of the [Torah](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Torah.html) and the [commandments](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0005_0_04542.html), all issues that arise in Jewish life.” UTJ has said that it is willing to join coalition governments that are dedicated to engaging the Palestinians in [peace negotiations](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/palstoc.html), primarily because the social and religious policies it pursues are a greater priority to the party and its constituency.

**Likud Yisrael Beiteinu** (Israel Our Home) **(31 seats)** is a **right-wing nationalist party** in favor of a [peace settlement](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/palstoc.html) with the Palestinians but wants to replace the land-for-peace approach with a mutual exchange of territories and populations. They believe in the principle of peace for peace, land for land. They supports the advancement of free-market economic policies and favors financial incentives, tax discounts and the reduction of bureaucracy, along with governmental assistance in the setting up of factories and research-and-development programs to attract [foreign investment](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Economy/foreigninvest.html). The party promotes a society that respects the religious and [halakhic](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Halakha_%26_aggadata_%26_midrash.html) aspects of Jewish life and is also tolerant of different religious outlooks.

**Shas** (an acronym literally meaning "Sephardi Guards") **(11 seats)** is an **ultra-orthodox** political party. They want to repair what it sees as the "continued economic and social discrimination against the Sephardic population of Israel". Shas advocates a state run according to [Halakha](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0008_0_08206.html), Jewish religious law, and actively engages in the ba’al teshuva movement, encouraging non-Orthodox Israelis of Sephardic and Mizrahi-Jewish heritage to adopt a Haredi Jewish lifestyle.

**HaBayit Yehudi** (Jewish House) (12 seats) is a far-right-wing party with a mission to restore the Jewish-Zionist essence to the State of Israel and its people. They promote elevating the role of Jewish law within the Israeli government, but also see a requirement for all Israeli citizens to have their needs met by the government.

**A rough political spectrum**

*This is a very general outlay – depending on perspective and on issue, parties may shift around. But this will give you a general framework of who shares general approaches.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|    | # of votes | 🡨 Left | Center | Right 🡪 |
| Combined Arab parties | Meretz | Labor | [Y](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_Labor_Party)esh Atid | Kadima | Hantnuah | [United Torah Judaism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Torah_Judaism) | [Likud Yisrael Beiteinu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Likud_Yisrael_Beiteinu) | [Shas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shas) | [The Jewish Home](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Jewish_Home) |
| Combined Arab parties | 11 |  | G | B-O | B | B | B-O | N | N | N | N |
| [Meretz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meretz) | 6 | G |  | G | B | O | O | N | N | N | N |
| [Labor Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_Labor_Party) | 15 | B-O\* | G |  | G | O | O | B | B | B | B |
| [Yesh Atid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yesh_Atid) | 19 | B | B | G |  | O | O | N | G | N | G |
| [Kadima](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kadima) | 2 | B | O | O | O |  | O | O | O | O | O |
| [Hatnuah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hatnuah) | 6 | B-O\* | O | O | O | O |  | B | O-B | B | B |
| [United Torah Judaism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Torah_Judaism) | 7 | N | N | B | N | O | B |  | B-O | B-O | N-B |
| [Likud Yisrael Beiteinu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Likud_Yisrael_Beiteinu) | 31 | N | N | B | G | O | O-B | B- O |  | B | B |
| [Shas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shas) | 11 | N | N | B | N | O | B | B-O | B |  | B-N |
| [The Jewish Home](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Jewish_Home) | 12 | N | N | B | G | O | B | N-B | B | B-N |  |

**KEY:**

**N** = **None**. Not only are deals impossible, but you should work to thwart this party’s bill.

**B** = **Bad**. These parties fundamentally disagree, but deals are not impossible, if the price is right…

**O** = **Okay**. The relationship is essentially neutral.

**G** = **Good**. Deals are likely, but be prepared to bargain.

**E** = **Excellent**. An alliance is almost guaranteed, as these two parties work together on a daily basis.

**Likud Yisrael Beiteinu (31 Seats)**

 **Likud Yisrael Beiteinu** (Israel Our Home in Hebrew) is a **right-wing nationalist** party established in 1999. In 2012, the Yisrael Beiteinu party merged with the ruling [Likud party](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/likudtoc.html). The party describes itself as "a national movement with the clear vision to follow in the brave path of [Zev Jabotinsky](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/jabotinsky.html)", the founder of [Revisionist Zionism](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/Revisionist_Zionism.html). Though its main electorate is Israel's large Russian immigrant population, the party does hold favor among the more veteran Israeli public as well.

* Likud Yisrael Beiteinu is in favor of a [peace settlement](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/palstoc.html) with the Palestinians
* Does not believe in the land-for-peace approach. Instead, they believe that peace for peace, land for land.
* "The end result [of a peace settlement with the Palestinians] must not be a state and a half for Palestinians and half a state for the Jews… It would be unjustifiable to create a Palestinian state that would exclude Jews while Israel became a bi-national state with an Arab minority of more than 20 percent of its citizens." The party states that [Jerusalem](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/jerutoc.html) must remain the undivided capital of [Israel](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/israel.html).
* Likud Yisrael Beiteinu supports free-market economic policies, financial incentives, tax discounts and the reduction of bureaucracy
* They support governmental assistance in the setting up of factories and research-and-development programs to attract [foreign investment](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Economy/foreigninvest.html).
* The party does not believe in the separation of religion and state.
* Likud Yisrael Beiteinu's manifesto states that the party will "strive to establish a modern society based on Jewish tradition and [Zionism](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/zion.html) – a society that respects the religious and [halakhic](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Halakha_%26_aggadata_%26_midrash.html) aspects of Jewish life and is also tolerant of different religious outlooks."

**Yesh Atid Party (19 Seats)**

Yesh Atid ("there is a future" in [Hebrew](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/hebrewtoc.html)) is a **centrist** [Israeli political party](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/partytoc.html) founded by Yair Lapid in 2012. Yesh Atid portrays itself as a centrist [political party](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/poltoc.html) with the slogan. "We believe that [Israel](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/israel.html) is a democratic, Jewish state in the spirit of the visions of the [prophets of Israel](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/The_List_of_Prophets.html)."

* Yesh Atid believes in a state where a Jewish majority which exists within **secure and defendable** borders.
	+ It is the state's responsibility to ensure the safety of its citizens. The State of Israel was established on the heels of the Holocaust which taught us that our security cannot depend on others.
* Equality under the law.
	+ Every person has the right to earn a living, raise a family and live as a free person in Israel as long as he upholds its laws.
	+ Every person in Israel must have their fundamental rights met regardless of religion, race, gender or sexual orientation.
* A Jewish State:
	+ A unified society and the principle which says "all Jews are responsible for one another".
	+ The State of Israel must function as the center of the Jewish world and care for all pursued and persecuted Jews anywhere on Earth.
* The State’s responsibilities:
	+ Education is the true basis for an upstanding society and is the state's responsibility to that every boy or girl in Israel receives and equal and quality education.
		- It is the state's responsibility to provide every child with the opportunity to grow up and develop according to their talents regardless of their socio-economic or geographic background. They believe in an economy which creates prospects for long term balanced growth with reducing poverty as one of its central goals. An economy which works to increase the workforce and protects the interests of the middle class which is the cornerstone of Israel's growth engine.
	+ It is the duty of the state to care for the health of its citizens.
	+ It is the state's responsibility to facilitate affordable housing for its citizens.
	+ It is the role of government to oversee the labor market, to reduce unemployment to a minimum, and to ensure that the taxes they pay will be used for the benefit of the entire population and not for the benefit of special interest groups or corrupt bureaucracy.
* Key Aspects of Israeli Culture:
	+ The existence of the State of Israel depends on its ability to continue its standing at the forefront of technological progress and that the state must encourage higher education, research and development, science, and technology in every possible way.
	+ Part of loving the land of Israel includes protecting its wildlife and the environment and they must do whatever they can to demonstrate concern with future generations by preserving the environment for them.
	+ The electoral system must create stable governments and reflect the majority opinion and not provide minority groups with the power to exercise political power.
	+ Every person has a voice and his civic duty is to make this voice heard.

**Labor Party (15 Seats)**

The Israel Labor Party strives to create a new reality in which there will be no more terrorism and war, and in which tremendous financial resources will no longer be committed to the arms race. Israel's peace and security policy will be aimed toward ending the Israeli-Arab conflict.

The regional policy will be based on pursuing economic cooperation in various fields; mutual ties in the areas of culture, science and technology; joint development of the standard of living and welfare; and fulfilling the promise of a better future with greater opportunities for the young generation in our region.

 In order to achieve this goal, Israel will continue to conduct peace negotiations, while at the same time, combating the forces of fundamentalism and terrorism that aim to destroy this process. This new reality will strengthen Israel's security and standing and will encourage economic prosperity and the welfare of the state.

* The Government is responsible for the personal and general security of the citizens of the State of Israel.
* Israel's peace policy is based on the reconciliation between both peoples and their readiness to live in respect of mutual rights to self-determination and statehood, and on the superior deterrent capability and strength of the IDF.
* Israel will continue to develop its qualitative advantage over those of Arab armies, and will place a high priority on independent research and development in the area of defense and on expanding the manufacture of innovative and sophisticated weaponry and material.
* Combating terror will be a fundamental component of Israel's peace and security policy.
* We call for the creation of a permanent [Palestinian](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/palstoc.html) state and a plan to "lease" the [West Bank](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/wbtoc.html) [settlement](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/settletoc.html) blocs from the Palestinians. We propose "leasing" the settlement blocs of [Ma'ale Adumim](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_%26_Culture/geo/maale.html), [Gush Etzion](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_%26_Culture/geo/Etzion.html) and [Ariel](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vie/ariel.html) from the Palestinians in exchange for money or land. The platform also outlines a timetable for renewed peace negotiations with the elected Palestinian leadership, which would not include an agreement for a temporary Palestinian state. We believe that a temporary Palestinian state based on the conditions of ending violence and [terrorism](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Terrorism/terrortoc.html) is not a good solution because the violence will only continue against Israel.
* We believe that Israel should not conduct negotiations with [Hamas](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Terrorism/hamastoc.html), even if they are elected to the Palestinian government. All [outposts](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/Outpostrep.html) must be immediately dismantled and removed because they undermine the peace process.
* [Jerusalem](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/jerutoc.html) is the undivided capital of Israel and the Jewish people, but we will consider giving the Palestinians a capital in the surrounding villages and towns by raising the issue of municipal boundaries.
* We support a Palestinian State, only if it is demilitarized and could only be formed through direct, bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

**SHAS (11 Seats)**

Shas (Hebrew acronym for "Shomrei Sfarad," literally meaning "Sephardi Guards") is an **ultra-orthodox** political party in Israel founded by [Rav Ovadiah Yosef](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/yosef.html) in 1984.

* With the [establishment of the State of Israel](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/dectoc.html) in 1948, and the riots and persecutions that resulted against the Jews of Arab countries, massive numbers of [Middle-Eastern Jews](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/talking/jew_refugees.html) were brought to Israel. The Jews from these [Sephardic](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Sephardim.html) Jewish communities did not experience movements for religious reform like the ones that arose in Western Europe or America and the main threat to their religious tradition came from the secular influences that they encountered under colonial rule, especially under French rule in [Morocco](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/Morocco.html), Tunisia and Algeria.
* The stated purpose of the party is to "return the crown to the former glory", and to repair what it sees as the "continued economic and social discrimination against the Sephardic population of Israel".
* Focusing on the needs of [Sephardic](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Sephardim.html) Orthodox Israelis, Shas established its own government-funded education system called El ha-Ma'ayan, which became popular in poor [Sephardic](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Sephardim.html) towns, increasing the party's popular support.
* **Shas advocates a state run according to**[**Halakha**](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0008_0_08206.html)**, Jewish religious law, and actively engages in the baal teshuva movement, encouraging non-Orthodox Israelis of Sephardic and Mizrahi-Jewish heritage to adopt a Haredi Jewish lifestyle.**
* Shas has not often been willing to negotiate with other Knesset parties. Of those involved in this exercise, negotiations are possible, but not likely with Labor and Likud Yisrael Beitanu
* Shas has a neutral relationship with Kadima and a moderate relationship with United Torah Judaism.
* Shas would never form a coalition with the Combined Arab Coallition, Meretz or Yesh Atid

**United Torah Judaism (7 Seats)**

**United Torah Judaism** (UTJ) was originally formed in 1992 as an **alliance between two ultra-**[**Orthodox**](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/ortho.html)**political parties** - [Agudat Israel](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/aguddat.html) and Degel HaTorah.

* UTJ represents the Israel's growing Ashkenazi (European descent) **ultra-Orthodox, or**[**Haredi**](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/orthostate.html)**,** community.
* **It opposes the separation of religion and state, civil marriage, drafting ultra-Orthodox men for military service and any changes to laws that prohibit businesses from opening on**[**Sabbath**](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Shabbattoc.html)**and**[**holidays**](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/holidays.html)**.**
* UTJ has been successful in securing financial aid for the ultra-Orthodox community, including government stipends for large families.
* UTJ advocates for more inclusion of Jewish law within the frame of the state, saying that it aspires to “resolve, in the spirit of the [Torah](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Torah.html) and the [commandments](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0005_0_04542.html), all issues that arise in Jewish life.”
* UTJ has been willing to join coalition governments that are dedicated to engaging the Palestinians in [peace negotiations](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/palstoc.html), primarily in order to win votes for its social and religious policies.

**Ha'Tnuah (6 Seats)**

* Ha'Tnuah is a **center-left**[**Zionist**](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/zionists.html)**Israeli**[**political party**](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/partytoc.html)**.**
* [Livni](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/TLivni.html), a foremost centrist leader in [Israeli politics](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/poltoc.html), left Kadima and formed Ha'Tnuah in order to "make [Israel](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/israel.html) a country that embraces [liberal](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/talking/36_liberal.html) and [Zionist values](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/zionists.html)."
* **Ha'Tnuah's platform is based around making peace with the Palestinians, social justice in Israel, environmental protection, military or national service for all citizens and religious pluralism.**
* The party motto is: "For Israelis who seek a country that embraces harmony and respect as opposed to polarization; a peace process rather than intransigence, and hope rather than despair – Ha'Tnua constitutes a new political development whose time has come."
* In Ha'Tnuah's first electoral cycle - the [January 2013 elections](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/knesset2013.html) - the party won just over 5% of the popular vote and was awarded 6 seats in the [Knesset](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/mktoc.html), making it the seventh largest political party in Israel.
* On February 19, 2013, [Livni](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/TLivni.html) held a joint press conference with Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Netanyahutoc.html) announcing that [Ha'Tnuah](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/hatnuahtoc.html)would become the first party to join his coalition following the [January 2013 elections](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/knesset2013.html). Livni was appointed as the incoming Justice Minister and was tapped to lead the Israeli peace negotiating team.

**Meretz (6 Seats)**

Meretz ("Energy," in Hebrew) is a left-wing Israeli party that promotes:

* + human and civil rights
	+ a social-democratic economic policy
	+ a vehement opposition to continuing the occupation, and
	+ political moderation.

Meretz believes in and promotes the values of equality, morality, justice and peace and is not ashamed to say, loud and clear, things that no other party dares to.

* Meretz was originally founded in 1992 through a union of three other left wing political parties -[Ratz](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/crm.html), [Mapam](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/Mapam.html) and [Shinui](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/Shinui.html). Ratz's leader, veteran Knesset member [Shualmit Aloni](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/aloni.html) was pegged as the new party's leader on their electoral list.
* Meretz stands for a Just and comprehensive peace between Israel and its neighbors. **Meretz believes peace should be Israel’s top priority:**
	+ **Meretz believes that reaching an agreement with Mahmoud Abbas should be Israel's top strategic priority. The window of opportunity for a two-state solution is closing, and time is running out – unless we reach a deal with Abbas, who is the most moderate Arab leader we can find, we will have to deal with the rise of fundamentalist forces. To prevent that, we must move ahead with the peace process.**
* **Meretz opposes a religious exemption to IDF service:**
	+ **Meretz is in favor of egalitarian service – civilian or military – while recognizing the individual's right not to serve for conscientious reasons. If someone can't or doesn't want to serve in the army, they can give back to society in the form of some kind of community service. Leaders – either political or rabbinical – cannot make an official call for objection. If one soldier makes a decision to refuse for ideological or conscientious reasons, and is in breach of the military law, has to be prepared to pay the price and serve time in prison if it comes to it.**

**Combined Arab Group (United Arab List, Hadash, and Balad) (11 Seats)**

*For the purposes of this exercise we have combined the three small Arab parties into a combined Arab block.*

***Shared Key Objectives:***

* The creation of a Palestinian state
* Secularization of Israel (removal of Jewish law from consideration)
* Social equality between Jews and non-Jews, requiring a focused effort to support marginalized populations
* The “right of return” for Palestinians who left when Israel was formed (and their descendants)

**The Combined Arab group will not join any coalitions that further preference Israeli Jews over Israeli Arabs.**

*Individual party details may be useful to understand the nuances of the parties:*

**The United Arab List** (Hebrew: מאוחדת ערבית רשימה: ألقائمة العربية الموحدة Arabic) is an Israeli political party represented and supported by Israeli Arabs and enjoys particular popularity among the [Bedouin](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_%26_Culture/Bedouin.html) population.

* Israeli withdrawal to the pre-[1967](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/67_War.html) borders and the creation of a [Palestinian state](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/finalmap1.html), with [East Jerusalem](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/eastjermap1.html) as its capital and the dismantlement of all Israeli settlements;
* the “[Right of return](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/refreturn.html)” to Israel for Palestinian [refugees](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/palreftoc.html) and their descendants;
* separation of religion and state;
* that Arabs should not be recruited to serve in the [Israel Defense Forces](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_%26_Culture/IDFtoc.html) (Israeli Arabs are currently exempt from compulsory military service); and,
* an increase in the budget for subsidizing all holy places belonging to the [Muslims](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/islamtoc.html), [Christians](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_%26_Culture/christpop.html) and [Druze](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_%26_Culture/druze.html).

**Hadash** (Hebrew acronym for “The Democratic Front for Peace and Equality”) is a **left-wing** Israeli political party with roots in Communism largely supported by Israeli Arabs. Hadash is a [Jewish](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaism.html) and [Arab](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_%26_Culture/arabs2.html) party, but has a mainly Arab electorate.

The main points of its platform include

* the complete Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in [1967](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/1967toc.html),
* recognition of the PLO,
* the separation of religion and state,
* the Palestinian "right of return" to Israeli territory,
* lobbying for workers' rights,
* encouraging Israel to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty,
* the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, and
* full equality for Israel's Arab citizens.

In general, Hadash views conflicts within Israeli society as class-based rather than nationalistic in nature.

**Balad** draws its **main base of support from Israeli Arabs**.

* 
* Balad’s platform advocates for an Israeli state which is not [Jewish](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaism.html) in character.
* The party supports “the evacuation of all of the [settlements](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/settletoc.html) and the removal of the racist [separation fence](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/fencetoc.html).”
* The party also demands the return of [Palestinian refugees](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/palreftoc.html) and their descendants to [Israel](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/israel.html) and that the Israeli government grant Arabs full autonomy in such areas as culture and education.
* Balad’s economic policies are left-of–center, supporting “the adoption of a just tax policy aimed at the equitable distribution of social resources, including a capital gains tax and a policy of tax cuts in general − particularly for low-wage workers.”

**Kadima (2 Seats)**

Kadima (meaning "forward" in Hebrew) is a centrist liberal political party in Israel founded by Ariel Sharon in 2005. Kadima supports Israel's definition as a Jewish and democratic state and advocates advancing the peace process while ensuring the security interests of the State of Israel, and accepts the principle of ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by establishing two states for two peoples. In the socio-economic arena, Kadima aspires to reduce social gaps and to combat poverty. It also supports increasing market competition by changing national priorities in the allocation of funds and increasing the degree of transparency regarding such allocations.

* **Kadima’s top priority is advancing the peace process.**
	+ The Israeli nation has a national and historic right to the whole of Israel. However, in order to maintain a Jewish majority, part of the Land of Israel must be given up to maintain a Jewish and democratic state.
	+ Israel shall remain a Jewish State and homeland. Jewish majority in Israel will be preserved by territorial concessions to [Palestinians](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/palstoc.html).
	+ [Jerusalem](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/jerutoc.html) and large [settlement](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/settletoc.html) blocks in the [West Bank](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/wbtoc.html) will be kept under Israeli control.
	+ The Israeli national agenda to end the [Israeli-Palestinian conflict](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/myths/mftoc.html) and achieve two states for two nations will be the [road map](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/roadtoc.html). It will be carried out in stages: dismantling [terror](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Terrorism/terrortoc.html) organizations, collecting firearms, implementing security reforms in the [Palestinian Authority](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/patoc.html), and preventing incitement. At the end of the process, a demilitarized Palestinian state devoid of terror will be established.
* Israel's political system will be modified to ensure stability
	+ Legislative proposals will be made to increase the MKs' commitment to enable the public's bypassing central committees and vote contractors, and bring an end to the tyranny of the [Likud](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/likudtoc.html) Central Committee. One possibility would be holding primary, regional and personal elections to the [Knesset](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/knesset.html) and the Prime Minister's office.
	+ Kadima wants to see a "presidential" system, in which voters choose the prime minister and legislators on an individual basis and not as part of a party list, with Knesset members elected according to specific regions of the country.
* **In the socio-economic arena, Kadima aspires to reduce social gaps and to combat poverty.**
	+ It also supports increasing market competition by changing national priorities in the allocation of funds and increasing the degree of transparency regarding such allocations.

[**Kadima**](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/sharonnewparty.html)**would not rule out a future coalition partnership with any Israeli political party or person.**

**HaBayit Yehudi** (Jewish House) (12 seats)

HaBayit Yehudi (The Jewish House) was founded in 2008, to formally merge the National Religious Party (the Mafdal) and the National Union (HaIchud HaLeumi) —into a unified right-wing party. The mission of HaBayit Yehudi is to restore the Jewish-Zionist essence to the State of Israel and its people.

Key Objectives:

* Jewish State
* The State of Israel is a Jewish state governed by democracy. We will act to strengthen the Jewish nature of the state, and we will fight against those who attempt to transform Israel into ‘a state of its citizens’. At the same time, we will uphold the rights of Israel’s minorities, among them the Arab minority.
* **Free economy with compassion**
* The State of Israel is a remarkable economic success. However, a large part of the population has missed out on the fruits of this prosperity. We will act to provide equal opportunity that will allow every young person in Israel a chance to succeed. We are committed to improving education, increasing competition, breaking up monopolies and wherever possible, cutting taxes for Israel’s middle classes. Israel must provide a safety net allowing a decent standard of living for those, and only those, who are unable to provide for themselves.
* **The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the future of Judea and Samaria**
* Today’s Israeli “market of ideas” provides only two solutions: the founding of a Palestinian state in the greater part of the West Bank, or the annexation of the West Bank and its two million Arab inhabitants. We believe that both of these solutions are impossible to implement, and, moreover, endanger the future of the State of Israel in terms of its security, demography, and values. Palestinian leadership does not want the West Bank, but rather the entire State of Israel – so that there is no perfect solution for our generation.
* **Religion and State**
* The State of Israel is a Jewish and democratic state. Its nature must be determined through discussion and deliberation by the entire body of the public on the basis of the Torah and the ethics of the prophets. Religious coercive legislation should be avoided, as should coercive secular laws. The status of Hebrew Law must be elevated. The Chief Rabbinate must see itself as a devoted provider of services to the entire population. And towards this goal the status of the Zionist rabbis must be improved. We believe that the path to a strong Israeli society is the path of deliberation and dialogue, and we will pursue this path with vigor. A good example of our vision is Yom Kippur - the general public respects this day, regardless of any legislation.
* **Military and civil service**
* We view the study of Torah as a vital and basic interest and value of the State of Israel. At the same time, we are aware of the vast amount of young people who do not study Torah, yet still enjoy an unjustified exemption from military or civil service. We act to include Haredi and ultra-orthodox citizens in the workforce and in national service, in a gradual manner and with the introduction of incentives.
* Treatment of the Arab minority
* The State of Israel currently makes a double mistake. It overlooks the incitement of Arab factors who seek the destruction of Israel, and it discriminates against the Arabs who wish to be a part of Israeli society. We will act in exactly the opposite way – we will show determination in the face of a fifth column, and support the Arab citizens who seek the good of Israel.